

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-11 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 /077 W
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R 051757Z EAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9593

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY MADRID

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 03526

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR. UI. SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS LONDON

REF: LONDON 1400

1. ACCORDING TO FCO, SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA'S
VISIT TO LONDON MARCH 2-3 WAS A SET PIECE FROM BEGINNING
TO END WITH NEITHER SIDE ADDING SO MUCH AS A GRACE NOTE
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TO THE SCORE. IN SEPARATE ONE-HOUR MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CALLAGHAN AND PRIME MINISTER WILSON, AREILZA REPEATED HIS NOW FAMILIAR TIMETABLE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN AND ARGUED THAT ANY FASTER PACE COULD LEAD TO BREAKDOWN ON THE PORTUGUESE MODEL AND, AREILZA IMPLIED, SUBSEQUENT INTERVENTION BY THE SPANISH MILITARY.

2. THE BRITISH RESPONSE WAS CORDIAL BUT CAREFUL. WILSON TOLD AREILZA THAT EUROPE WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHENED BY A DEMOCRATIC SPAIN AND HMG WOULD WATCH WITH SYMPATHY THE EFFORTS OF THE NEW SPANISH GOVERNMENT TO REACH THAT END. WILSON PREDICTABLY WENT ON TO SAY THAT WHILE BRITAIN WOULD CERTAINLY MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO PRESSURE THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED FASTER THAN IT THOUGHT PRUDENT, MOVEMENT ON SUCH MATTERS AS UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY, LEGALIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR TRADE UNIONS, AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS WOULD PRODUCE A CONDUCIVE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH SPAIN COULD TAKE ITS PLACE AS A FULL MEMBER OF EUROPE. POLITE, BUT CLEAR, INFERENCE WAS SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN EC MUST AWAIT INDISPUTABLE AND PERVASIVE DEMOCRATIC INTERNAL REFORMS. ALL THIS WAS SAID IN FRIENDLY SPIRIT BY WILSON AND BRITISH BELIEVE AREILXA WENT AWAY PLEASED BY HIS RECEPTION HERE.

3. WITH REGARD TO GIBRALTAR AREILZA HINTED THAT SPANISH GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT PRESS ISSUE FOR THE TIME BEING AND SUGGESTED THAT SPAIN'S PROSPECTS FOR REALIZING ITS GOALS CONCERNING GIBRALTAR WOULD BE IMPROVED BY DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION IN SPAIN. BRITISH DID NOT DISAGREE, BUT GOT NO SPECIFIC INDICATION THAT RESTRICTIONS WOULD BE EASED ANY TIME SOON.

4. SPAIN'S INTEREST IN JOINING NATO WAS MENTIONED ONLY ONCE BY AREILXA DURING CONVERSATIONS, AND IN MOST DESULTORY MANNER.

5. COMMENT. NOT WITHSTANDING CORDIALITY OF BRITISH RECEPTION, AREILZA'S VISIT DID NOTHING TO SHAKE THE LABOR GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THAT SPAIN MUST CONCLUSIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

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PROVE ITS DEMOCRATIC CREDENTIALS BEFORE ITS MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY, NOT TO SAY NATO, COULD SERIOUSLY BE ENTERTAINED. AS WE POINTED OUT REFTEL, THE BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARD SPAIN WILL BE TO WAIT PATIENTLY AND SEE AND THEY HAVE SEEN FAR FROM ENOUGH THUS FAR.

ARMSTRONG

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NNN

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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